

That is what is being proposed here. If you oppose that, all of a sudden you do not care about the people who are unemployed. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard that in the last 2 weeks; that it is obstruction that you want to pay for it. Should we be working hard to secure the future of the children such as Madeline?

We are told that over the next 9 years, we are going to borrow an additional \$9.8 trillion, based on the budget projections that are out there. Of that \$9.8 trillion, almost half of it is money we are going to borrow and turn around to pay interest on what we already owe. That is eerily close to those of us who get into trouble with credit cards. We get another credit card, borrow the max on it to pay off the other credit cards. Then we get in trouble with that one and get another one. Pretty soon, we cannot pay anything.

The Chinese own over \$900 billion of our bonds, the Russians \$800 billion. Have we considered the fact that our problems, in terms of our foreign policy with Iran and our ability to put sharp, tough sanctions on somebody who wants to use and develop nuclear weapons could possibly be inhibited by the fact that two of the countries opposing those strong, tough sanctions own a lot of our bonds and that we are dependent on them? Could it also be that the week before last, when the Treasury option was very soft because the Chinese did not participate, that is a warning shot across our bow? We are in waters this country has never seen before. If we pass this bill and we continue to pass more bills, not having made the tough choices, we are steaming toward a catastrophe.

What will that look like? It is not that we cannot fix the problem. It is not as if we could not go and find \$9.2 billion out of a nearly \$4 trillion budget. It is that we refuse to. It is not that it is impossible. We refuse to. We refuse to do the same things families across this country do every day; that is, make a choice about priorities.

My office just last week, with the help of the Congressional Research Service and the GAO, identified 70 duplicate programs on nutrition across three Federal Departments. We now have 70 programs for food and nutrition across three departments, with thousands upon thousands of Federal employees, thousands upon thousands of pages of bureaucratic gobbledygook and regulations. I would propose probably we ought to have one good program on food and nutrition. We do not address that. The authorizing committees do not. The appropriating committees do not.

We have 105 programs that encourage people to go into math, science, technology, and engineering across six different agencies—105 programs. There is not one agency that does not have considerable waste in it, and there is probably not one American who would not think that we could not cut 1 or 2 or 3 percent from every agency and drive efficiency. But we will not do that.

The real question is: Why won't we? We will beat up people because they will not agree to spend Madeline's money and her future, but we will not agree to trim the waste, the fat, duplication, and fraud out of the Federal Government. It is no wonder the public has such a poor image of Congress because we are actually not doing what they are asking us to do.

It would be different if there was not waste in the Federal Government. If everything was fine-tuned, effective, and efficient, one could make an argument for borrowing this money. But nobody I know of believes the Federal Government is efficient and effective throughout its myriad departments and agencies. If the majority might feel that way, that it is not, why would we not do the hard work of paying for this bill?

What does it mean to borrow \$9.2 billion this month and \$10 billion last month and \$10 billion before and the \$120 billion we passed in the first 3 months of the second session of the 111th Congress? What does it mean? It means we do not think we have to play by the same rules as the rest of the American public. We have a tilted sense of reality. There is no obligation on us to eliminate waste to provide a good for those people who are depending on us.

We will go forward this evening on a motion to proceed to this bill unpaid for, charged to the Madelines of this world, and all you have to do is take \$9.2 billion—it is not much in Washington speak; it is twice the size of Oklahoma's budget for a year—and we will charge it to a credit card to our kids.

Ultimately, what we are doing is stealing a college education from our kids. We are stealing a job opportunity from our kids. We are stealing the ability for our kids to own a home and to provide for their children what was provided for them. You see, the heritage we have that built this country was one of sacrifice, where we make decisions that require us to make a sacrifice to create opportunity. When you turn that upside down, the American experiment fails. When we steal opportunity from the future so we can benefit for today, we eliminate the genius that made this country great. It is time we reversed that.

It is not really a partisan issue. I know the press is going to say that. It is partisan for our future. It is partisan for our kids. And we can do both. We can find \$9.2 billion that isn't as effectively spent as will be spent on COBRA or unemployment insurance or on flood insurance or on fixing the SGR for a short period of time. We can do that, but we won't because we are in the habit of not making hard choices. We are in the habit of doing the least best thing rather than the best thing.

The best thing for our budget, the best thing for our future, the best thing for our children's future is for us to say X, Y, and Z are not nearly as important

as unemployment insurance benefits, are not as important as COBRA benefits, are not as important as fixing the SGR for a short period of time. When will we muscle up the courage to start making those kinds of decisions?

We can't continue doing what we are doing. We can't grow to \$20 trillion worth of debt—over 100 percent of our GDP. At the rate we are going, in 2010, we will have \$24 trillion worth of debt, and \$24 trillion, at 6 percent interest, is \$1.5 trillion a year in interest payments. We can't make it. We cannot handle that. And the reality will only come home when it is too late.

Senator REID, when we passed the pay-go bill, said it was a new start. He said we are going to open our billfold, and if the money is there we will spend it but we are not going to spend money that is not in our billfold—to paraphrase his quote. Well, this bill goes to an empty billfold. The money is not there. So we can either increase our debt, which will make life for the Madelines of this world tougher or we can actually take on some tough decisionmaking as a body and actually eliminate lower priority programs. Would that have some impact on some programs? Yes. I mean, we could actually take a 1-percent across-the-board cut and come up with \$30 billion easily. Americans know we could get 1 percent out of the Federal agencies. But we are not going to do that either.

The question is, When will we start acting in the responsible role with which we are charged? When will we start thinking with a long-term perspective about what is going to happen to our country if, in fact, we don't start making the hard choices now? No matter how much scorn, no matter how many derisive statements are made, the Madelines of the world are worth it. When we sit and relax and think this is not as big a problem as we hear described, we fall into the same trap as every other republic in history. And they all collapsed. No republic has survived more than 250 years, and they all collapsed for the same reason. They all collapsed ultimately because they lost control of their fiscal policy—taxes, spending, priorities.

So we have a choice in front of us. This isn't the first time we are going to have this choice, and it won't be the last. But a question that I think the American people ought to be asking is, When is the Congress going to start acting in a responsible manner? When are they going to start following the guidelines every other prudent financial decisionmaker makes, whether it be the head of a household, a wage earner, a small business, or a small nonprofit? They all live within a budget, and what they do is they say: Here is the most important priority and here is the least, and they go down the line. When the money runs out, they either generate efficiency to allow that money to be more effective and more efficient in how it is spent or they eliminate the lower priority items.